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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 2 January 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letter dated 18 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/51/758-S/1996/1058).

It is ironic, if not tragic, that Lebanon finds it fit to address the Secretary-General a long list of alleged "flagrant violations" of its "sovereignty and independence" by Israel, without making any reference to the context in which the reported events occurred.

Notable in this regard is Lebanon's inability or lack of will to exercise its sovereign authority in order to prevent terrorist acts emanating from its own territory.

Armed elements of the Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations roam southern Lebanon freely, equipped with a variety of weapons and missiles, the majority of which are transferred by the Islamic Republic of Iran to Lebanese territory. They are permitted to operate with impunity from Lebanese soil and to carry out attacks against Israel with the tacit acquiescence of the Lebanese Government, as well as the support of other countries known to practise terrorism. In view of this, Lebanon would be well advised to concentrate its efforts on putting its house in order rather than on filing complaints in the United Nations.

International law prohibits Lebanon from sanctioning terror under any guise. In serving as a launching pad for terrorist activity, Lebanon is in direct contravention of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly in 1970,

which forbids States from allowing their territory to be used for acts directed against neighbouring countries.

In addition, Lebanon is acting in blatant disregard of General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 on measures to eliminate international terrorism, in which the Assembly called upon States to refrain, inter alia, from encouraging or supporting terrorist activity.

Israel has repeatedly stated its desire to resolve all pending disputes with Lebanon through bilateral negotiations, and to reach in the meantime appropriate arrangements which will calm the volatile situation along our common border. This desire, however, does not in any way exempt the Government of Israel from the responsibility to act in self defence and protect its citizens, harassed by Lebanese terrorism.

Israel will continue to take all such legitimate measures as long as Lebanon fails to fulfil its obligations under international law. At the same time, Israel calls upon Lebanon to resume its participation in the negotiating process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 151, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) David PELEG
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.